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249 S/P 1952

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE Memorandum of Conversation

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1952 OCT 6 AM 10 21

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR S/P

SUBJECT: French Position Regarding MEDO.

PARTICIPANTS: General Omar Bradley, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Mr. Nitze - S/P
Mr. Nolting - G

COPIES TO: S - The Secretary
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Mr. Nitze and I went to see General Bradley in order to enlist his support in dissuading the French from their insistence on holding a US-UK-French meeting to discuss the French proposal that the NATO Standing Group should serve also as the High Military Authority of MEDO. Mr. Nitze pointed out that the French had previously presented us with an Aide-Memoire urging the Three-Power meeting and we had prepared a reply, opposing the suggestion, which had been forwarded to Defense for concurrence. The British had discussed the matter with the French and we were in receipt of a telegram from London in which the British suggested that such a Three-Power meeting was necessary before the French would proceed to comment on the British proposals for MEDO.

General Bradley agreed that it is unnecessary and undesirable to hold a Three-Power meeting on this subject. He said that the French should be dissuaded from their position that the NATO Standing Group should be expanded into a Three-Power "Combined Chiefs of Staff".

In discussing tactics, Mr. Nitze reverted to a suggestion previously made that Air Marshall Elliot should designate an officer on his staff who would consult with the staff of the JCS on non-NATO matters, especially Middle East defense matters. Mr. Nitze suggested that if we did this, the British would feel that they have a better "in" with us in world planning, and as a result would be less inclined to support the French in the

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matter concerning MEDO. General Bradley said that Elliot has recently been pressing him on this; that he had taken it up with the Chiefs, who took a dim view of it; and that he was unwilling to go along with Elliot's suggestion, inasmuch as he could see no practical result from staff conversations at the level proposed. As an alternative, he suggested that he might have more frequent conversations with Air Marshall Elliot (he said that he already had discussions with him quite frequently on global matters), and that if Elliot wished he would be willing to make the meetings more formal, with an agenda, etc. He made it clear, however, that these would be discussion meetings for the purpose of exchanging views, rather than meetings for the purpose of making decisions. We agreed that an answer to Elliot along the lines suggested by General Bradley would fit nicely into our tactic of preventing British support for the French position re MEDO. It was left somewhat vague, however, as to whether General Bradley would in fact make such a proposal to Air Marshall Elliot.

General Bradley did agree to speak both to Elliot and to General Ely in an effort to dissuade them from insisting upon a Three-Power meeting concerning MEDO, using the arguments listed in our draft Aide-Memoire to the French, a copy of which I left with him.

General Bradley then raised the question of Iran, and stated that he and the Chiefs were greatly worried by the deteriorating situation there. Mr. Nitze brought him up-to-date on our thinking and actions, and told him of our recommendation to the President which would have the effect of breaking away from the joint UK-US communications to Mosadeq. General Bradley said he agreed with this, and said that he felt it preferable for us not to be "in the same boat" with the British on this matter, even if we ourselves have little hope of finding a formula which will prevent further deterioration in Iran. In a full discussion of this matter, Mr. Nitze emphasized the serious nature of any decision which would break the solidarity of the British and ourselves in our approach to the Iranian problem. He said that it might well have its effect in UK-US cooperation in other areas; that we had very carefully considered this danger but had reached the conclusion that we must attempt, by using our own best judgment, to prevent the eventual fall of Iran into the Communist orbit. General Bradley expressed agreement with this view.

General Bradley was asked about the possibility of introducing United States forces into Iran, in the event the Shah called upon us to do so to prevent a Communist coup. He said that this would not be militarily feasible, and further pointed to the danger of intervention from the north by the USSR. We asked for suggestions of possible courses of action. He had no specific suggestions, but reaffirmed his view that we had exhausted the possibilities of joint UK-US approach and that we should probably not try longer to discourage the purchase of oil by American companies.

In discussing in general terms the strategic problem in the Middle East, General Bradley said that the JCS think in terms of an "inner circle", which would

would include the Suez bases and the surround areas ne ssary for their defense, and an "outer circle" which wou nclude Iran. With the accession of Turkey to NATO, and the long range possibil ties of MEDO, the "outer circle" concept became more feasible milit rily, provided Iran does not go Communist. He considered that the Turkish army, plus US and UK air power working on the flank of any invading force approaching the Middle East through Iran, could greatly impede, if not prevent, the conquest of the Middle East. If, however, the flank of an invading force were made less vulnerable by an Iran allied with Russia, the defense task would become immeasurably more difficult.

General Bradley raised the subject of the pending anti-trust suits against certain American oil companies, and expressed the strong view that these suits were gravely jeopardizing our supply of strategic oil. He said that it was his impression that not only in the Middle East, but also in other countries where American oil interests operate, it was likely that the countries would adopt the attitude that they would not do business with companies which were under indictment by their own government. I did not gather that he had any specific or immediate cause for alarm in this respect, but that he was predicting a trend which would in his view undoubtedly arise from these suits. We reviewed what we had done in this matter, and what our attitude had been from the first, but no conclusions were reached as to how to ameliorate the ill effects in foreign and defense policy of this anti-trust action.

Frederick E. Nolting, Jr.

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TAB B – EXCISE